

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5765

As Passed House:

April 13, 2009

Title: An act relating to the fruit and vegetable district fund.

Brief Description: Regarding the fruit and vegetable district fund.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senator Schoesler).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/20/09, 3/26/09 [DP];

General Government Appropriations: 4/1/09, 4/3/09 [DP].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 4/13/09, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes a transfer of \$150,000 from the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account to the Plant Pest Account for control activities related to *Rhagoletis pomonella*.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Grant-Herriot, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Smith, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jacks, Kretz, Liias, McCoy, Nelson, Ormsby, Pearson, Van De Wege and Warnick.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Darneille, Chair; Takko, Vice Chair; McCune, Ranking Minority Member; Hinkle, Assistant Ranking

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Minority Member; Armstrong, Blake, Crouse, Dunshee, Hudgins, Kenney, Pedersen, Sells, Short and Williams.

Staff: Owen Rowe (786-7391)

Background:

Fruit and Vegetable District Funds.

The Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account (Inspection Account) houses all fees collected by the Director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to recover the costs of inspections or certifications of fruits and vegetables. Funds in the Inspection Account are to be used for the WSDA's fruit and vegetable inspection program.

Washington is divided into two fruit and vegetable inspection districts. Each district has an individual district fund within the larger Inspection Account. If the district fund contains a certain amount of money, the inspection fees for that district are reduced.

Plant Pest Account.

The Plant Pest Account (Pest Account) is used by the WSDA as a receptacle for any fees collected for special inspections, plant diagnostic services, pest control activities, or special certifications requested by growers, farmers, or other interested parties. These services may be requested of the WSDA to facilitate the movement or sale of various agricultural products, including forest products, floricultural products, and horticultural products.

Rhagoletis Pomonella Control.

Rhagoletis pomonella, commonly referred to as the apple maggot, but also known as the railroad worm, is a native insect to North America. It is considered to be a pest of several fruits, including apples.

In 1997 a set amount of the tree fruit inspection fees collected in one of the fruit and vegetable inspection districts was transferred from the Inspection Account to the Pest Account. The transfer was for \$200,000 and was required to be used for the control of *Rhagoletis pomonella* within the district.

If any amount of the \$200,000 is still available as of June 30, 2009, that amount must be transferred back to the Inspection Account and credited to the fruit and vegetable inspection district that contains Yakima County.

Summary of Bill:

An additional transfer of \$150,000 from the Inspection Account to the Pest Account is authorized by July 1, 2009. Like the 1997 transfer, the funds involved in this transfer must originate from tree fruit inspection fees collected in one of the fruit and vegetable inspection districts, and the funds must be used for the control of *Rhagoletis pomonella* within the district. The fruit and vegetable inspection district affected by the transfer includes Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, Yakima, Pacific, Lewis, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Clark, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia, Asotin, Whitman, and Garfield counties.

If any amount of the \$150,000 is still available as of June 30, 2013, that amount must be transferred back to the Inspection Account and credited to the fruit and vegetable inspection district that contains Yakima County.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Agriculture & Natural Resources):

(In support) Transferring these funds is critical to control apple maggots. A large segment of the tree fruit industry exports to foreign countries; some foreign markets will be closed to Washington tree fruit if there is even one apple maggot outbreak. The funds will be used to allow rapid response to emerging infestations.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (General Government Appropriations):

(In support) The transfer of funds from the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account to the Plant Pest Account is necessary to monitor for the occurrence of the Apple Maggot in the state. If this transfer is not authorized, apple growers could lose tens of millions of dollars through crop losses. In 1997 a similar transfer occurred and the money has lasted until now. This transfer has no cost to the state or impact on the budget.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Agriculture & Natural Resources): Dave Ducharme, Yakima Valley Growers and Shippers Association.

Persons Testifying (General Government Appropriations): Dave Ducharme, Yakima Valley Growers & Shippers Association; and Mary Beth Lang, Washington State Department of Agriculture.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Agriculture & Natural Resources): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (General Government Appropriations): None.